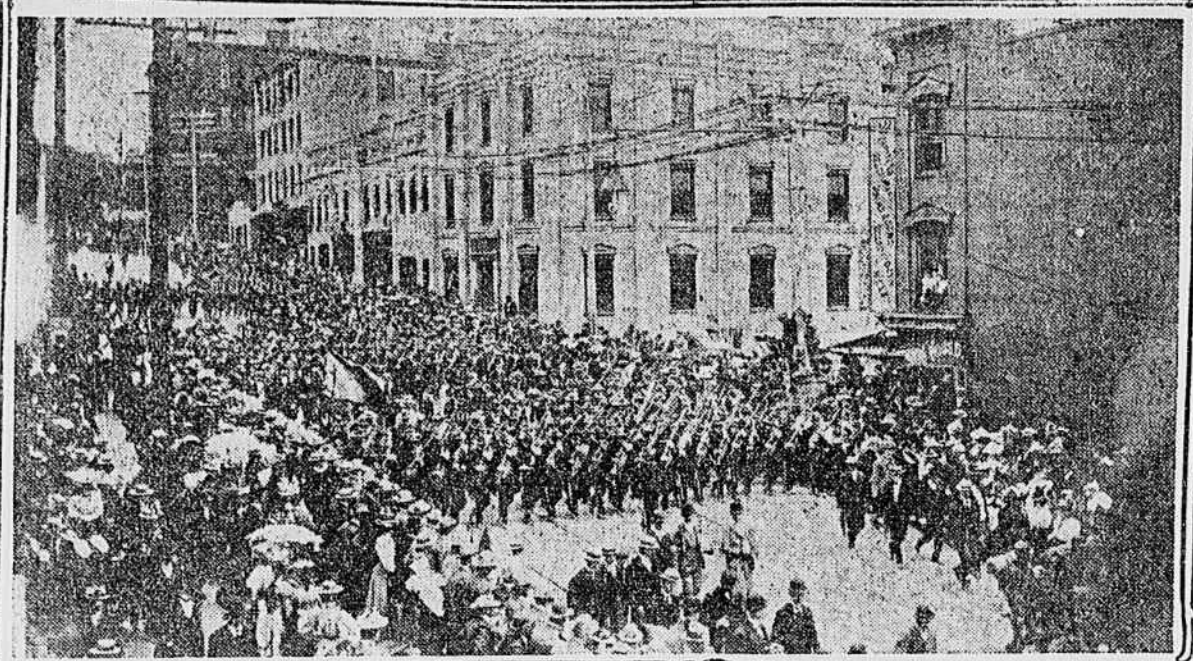
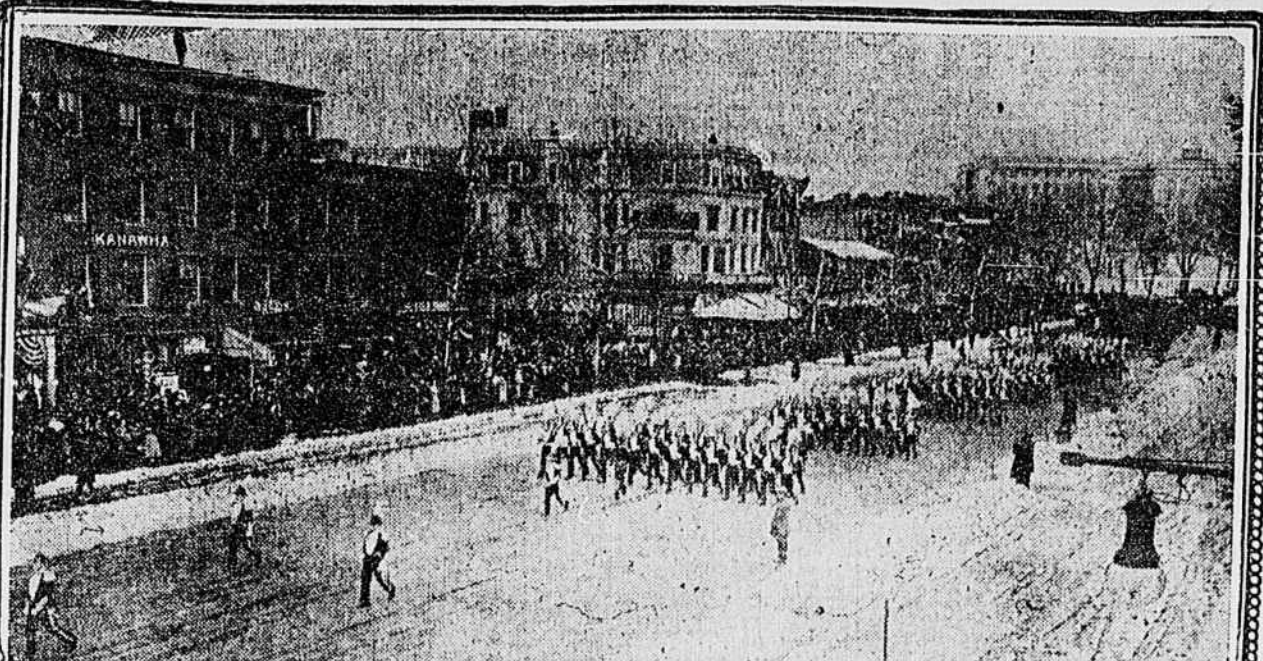


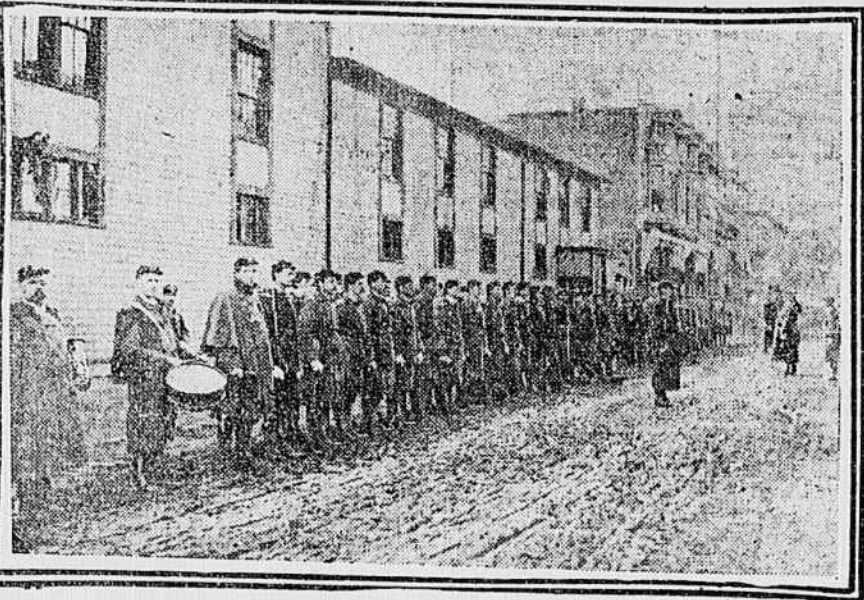
The Richmond Light Infantry Blues in History



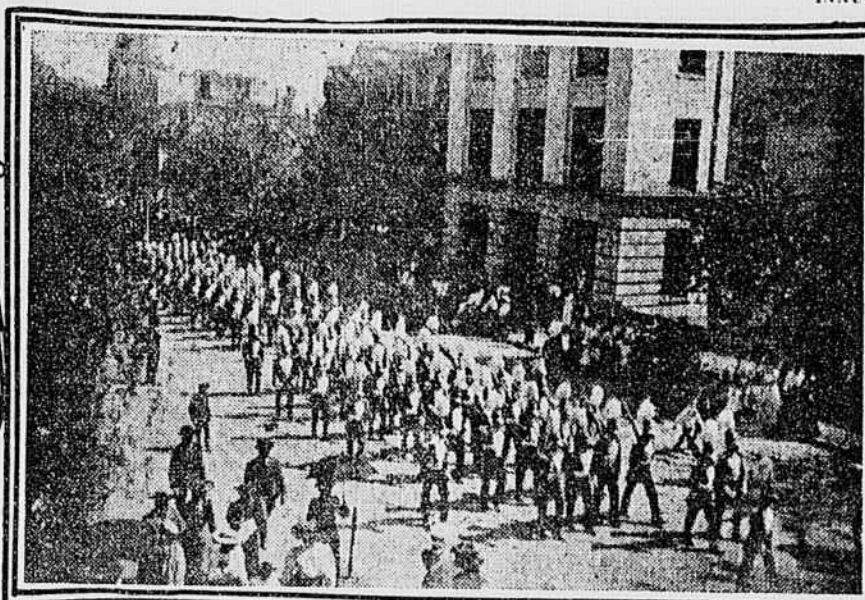
MARCHING TO ENTRAIN FOR SPANISH WAR, 1898.



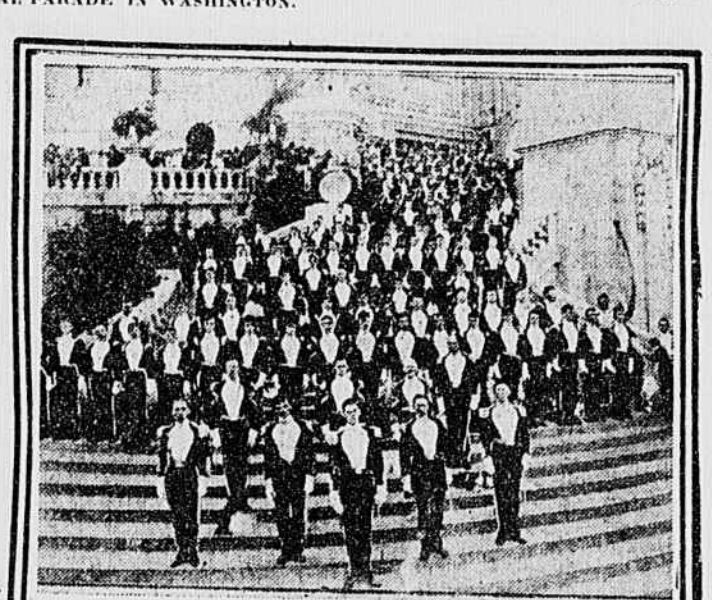
INAUGURAL PARADE IN WASHINGTON.



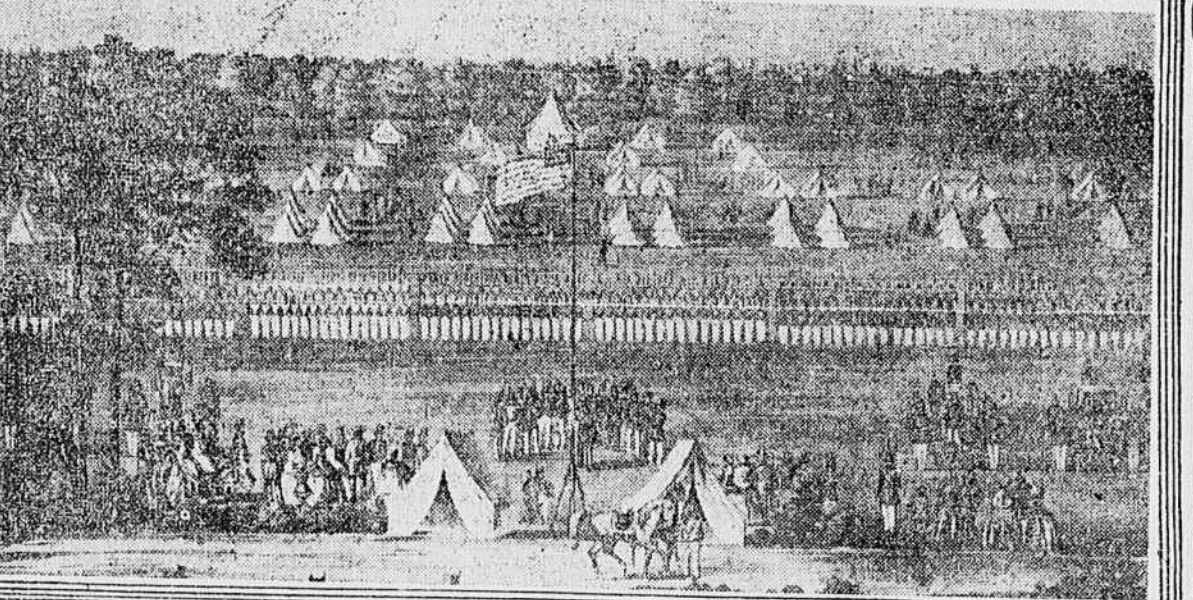
STRIKE DUTY IN POCAHONTAS COAL FIELD, 1901.



LAST HONORS TO GENERAL FITZHUGH LEE, 1905.



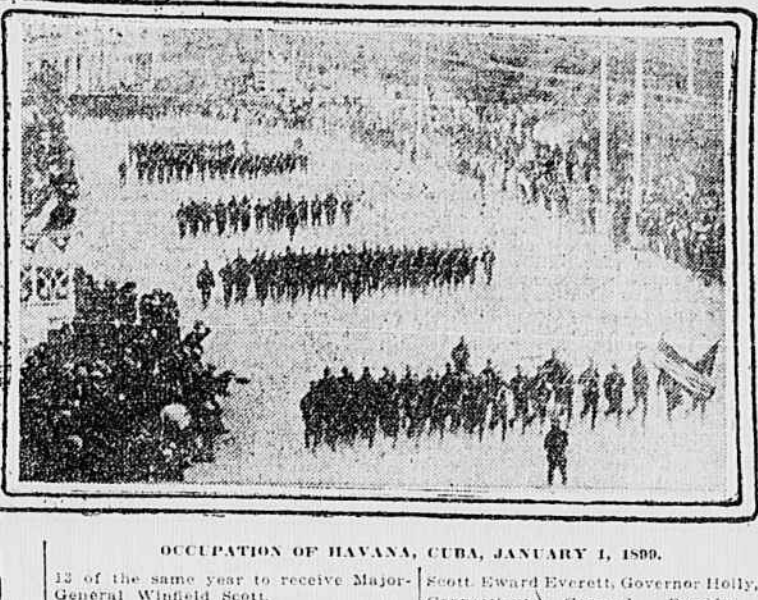
MUSIC HALL, ST. LOUIS EXPOSITION, 1904.



IN CAMP IN HANOVER COUNTY, 1858.



CAPTAIN WILLIAM RICHARDSON, FIRST COMMANDER.



OCCUPATION OF HAVANA, CUBA, JANUARY 1, 1899.

So closely interwoven is the history of the Richmond Light Infantry Blues with the history of the city and State that any retrospection or search of the records of the command brings to the mind the memories of nearly every event of public importance in the life of Richmond. The Blues for one hundred and twenty-two years have numbered much of the village, the town, the metropolis of Richmond. They have been identified with every historic occasion, have been in the public service innumerable times, have acted as escorts to hundreds of distinguished guests, and have fought and paraded, and danced and marched their way into a great place in the minds and hearts of the people.

Most of the residents of Richmond whose ancestors have been here for as long as two generations have at some time or other been identified with the Richmond Blues, by membership or by relationship. When the city was young, most of the able-bodied young men were in the command, while at no time in its history has it lacked for men to fill the ranks set out for it.

Replete With Events.

A history of the Richmond Light Infantry Blues would fill volumes, and would be a work requiring an immense amount of research. The command lost most of its records in the disastrous fire of three years ago, and while the earlier writings which involve events in the life of the command reveal much of its history, their diffusion would mean an immense amount of work in compilation. Besides, there is so much that can be written.

To those who love history (and who does not?) the most interesting thing which could be said about the Blues would be the recital of the events in which they had a part, and which recall to the mind the earlier scenes of the city, the State and the Republic. It is the purpose of this article merely to sketch these for the purpose just indicated, and not to attempt in any sense anything approaching a history of the famous command.

Beginnings in 1780.

It was in the year 1780 that the company of Richmond Light Infantry was raised by Captain William Richardson, who remained its commander

for twenty years. The original roll contained the names of sixty citizens of Richmond, recorded by ancient writers as being "the most respectable" which the little town at the head of Tidewater and the James then boasted. The first uniform was scarlet, trimmed with white, and was abandoned, because of its resemblance to the British red coat, which made it obnoxious to the citizens of the new republic. So the "blue coat," trimmed with white, was adopted in its stead, and the Richmond Light Infantry became the Richmond Light Infantry Blues.

At the reorganization which took place at this time, Captain Richardson was re-elected commander. The company quickly grew to a membership of eighty. As the officers received their commission on May 19, following the election, that day was selected as the anniversary.

Negro Rebellion.

The first public service rendered by the Blues, of which there is definite record was in connection with what is known as "Gabriel's Rebellion." Gabriel was a slave, and is said to have organized an insurrection among members of his race on plantations in the north of Richmond. Governor James Monroe received information that the uprising would take place on August 30, 1800, and the militia was ordered to be ready for service. With the Blues reported, and were intrusted with the duty of patrolling the city and its environs, and guarding its public buildings, in which the arms and ammunition were kept and the State prisoners quartered. It is recorded that a heavy rain fell just previous to the uprising, which so swelled Bacon's Quarter Branch and Gillies' Creek that the negroes could not cross into Richmond. The whole countryside became aroused, and got under arms, seeing which, the negroes abandoned their designs. The principals were arrested and executed.

Monthly parades were had for some years after this event, and regular drills were pursued.

Passed Resolutions.

The Blues next became alarmed at the attack made on the United States frigate Chesapeake by the British

ships-of-war Leonard on June 22, 1807. They assembled at the Bell Tavern on June 29, and passed resolutions expressing their indignation at the high-handed conduct of the Britisher, offering their services to the United States government to aid in redressing their wrongs, and pledged their lives and their fortunes in support of such measures as the government might adopt for the purpose of obtaining satisfaction.

These resolutions were forwarded to Thomas Jefferson, President of the United States, who acknowledged their receipt in a letter to Captain Richardson, highly complimentary to the patriotism of the Blues, and promising to remember their offer should their services be required in vindicating the country's rights.

It seems that the Blues actually went to the country's defense at that time, for having later tendered their service to the State, the Governor sent them from Richmond with General Matthews's brigade, leaving on July 7, 1807. The march was to Portsmouth, Va., a distance of 120 miles by road, where they arrived on the evening of July 12, with few of the necessities of life. It was found that the forces already on the scene were ample to repel any attack from the British squadron, and the Blues were sent home, returning on July 28. By the pay roll then made out it appears that there were seven officers and eighty-three privates.

First Commander Dies.

After a faithful service of twenty years, Captain Richardson died on June 12, 1809. His company buried him with military honors.

Not until late in the War of 1812 did the Blues get into active service, having been mustered in on August 25, 1814, when it was reported that the British fleet would ascend York River and attack Richmond. The command went to Watkinson Church. Finding that the fleet did not come up the river, the Blues came home.

Various social and political events, according to records composed of clippings from the Richmond papers of that era, now in possession of Captain T. B. McDowell, of Company A. A perusal of this volume makes one re-

gret that the scrap-book fashion has gone out.

Upon the invitation of the commanders of militia companies in Norfolk and Portsmouth, the Blues went to those towns on October 20, 1820, to witness the launching of the Delaware.

Washington's birthday in 1821 was celebrated with a ball at the Union Hotel, which is described as one of the most magnificent affairs ever witnessed in the city. There are said to have been 2,500 of the gentler sex present.

The Norfolk and Portsmouth companies returned the call of the Blues on July 4, 1821, when they dined at Buchanan Spring, near this city. At this time, say the records, there were 100 muskets in the Blues' line.

It is most interesting to note the deep concern felt by the Blues for the Greeks who suffered in the events of late in 1823. A meeting of the company was held at the Bell Tavern on January 15, 1824, when the Blues themselves contributed liberally to help the Greeks and adopted suitable resolutions.

One of the principal events of this period of the Blues' history was the reception given to General Lafayette upon his visit to the United States. The command went by boat to Yorktown, where on October 18, 1824, a grand review and parade took place. The return was then made to Richmond, and the marquis was received here on his arrival at Rocketts, and escorted to his quarters at the Eagle Hotel. The next day Lafayette visited the City Hall, the Capitol Square and other places, and was addressed under a Gothic arch in the square by Chief Justice John Marshall. He was escorted out of the city upon his departure on November 2 by the volunteers, who fired a salute of thirteen guns.

Reported Insurrections.

Negro insurrections were much talked of in 1829, the country becoming very much alarmed. The Blues patrolled the city on August 1, 2 and 3. The next year there was the "Nat Turner insurrection" in Southampton county, and the Blues volunteered, but were required to protect this city. The company again offered its services to the Governor in 1831, when there were rumors of an insurrection in the Ches-

terfield coal mines, which proved unfounded.

In honor of the French Revolution and of the abdication of Charles X, the Blues paraded on September 11, 1830. They paraded on January 12, 1831, and received a handsome flag from Mrs. Sherard. On July 4, 1832, they visited Petersburg by invitation. A Fourth of July celebration in Norfolk in 1836 was also visited. On this latter occasion the command received such courtesies from Captain Henderson, of the steamer Thomas Jefferson, that it presented him with a silver cup.

On all occasions when distinguished men visited Richmond the Blues were called upon to add to the honors of the day. Thus, on July 26, 1838, they turned out to receive President Martin Van Buren, and escorted him to the Powhatan House. The clippings of the Richmond papers of those days are numerous with accounts of all sorts of social affairs in which the Blues took part, especially of visits paid to and returned by militia companies in other towns of Virginia.

Military Toast.

These events are too numerous to be chronicled, but it is worthy of note that on a visit to Fredericksburg on October 18, 1839, Captain George W. Munford proposed the following toast, which seems to have made a deep impression: "At the final review of all souls, may each man be ready to execute the order, 'On right into line, guide right!'"

Henry Clay addressed the Blues at Military Hall on February 22, 1840. On July 7, 1842, the Fredericksburg Blues tried to steal a march and take possession of Richmond, but the Blues got next and arrested the bunch at the First Market, escorting the visitors to Church Hill. Another celebration of the battle of Yorktown was had in 1847. During the Mexican War the only part taken by the Blues was a parade to escort going and returning officers. A procession was had on March 21, 1848, as a mark of respect upon the death of former President John Quincy Adams.

Another funeral in which the Blues took part was that of former President James K. Polk, on October 30, 1849. They turned out on November

12 of the same year to receive Major-General Winfield Scott.

Corner-Stone Laid.

President Zachary Taylor and ex-President John Tyler came to Richmond on February 21, 1850, to be present at the laying on the following day of the corner-stone of the Washington Monument in Capitol Square. The Blues received them.

They turned out on April 22 of that year to receive the body of John C. Calhoun.

Less than five months from the day when the Blues honored President Taylor, they were called to Washington to perform the sad duty of marching in his funeral procession. "The detachment consisted of thirty-three men. Less than one year later, his successor, President Millard Fillmore, came to Richmond and was given a reception in which the Blues took part.

Time after time military commands from other towns and cities in Virginia were received and entertained, the list being too long for publication. It is worthy of note, however, that a demonstration of considerable size attended the visit of the Washington Grays, of Philadelphia, on February 24, 1856. In February, 1855, the Blues made a trip North, being royally entertained in Washington, Baltimore and Philadelphia.

Indicating the feeling in which the command was held in 1858, the Richmond Dispatch commented: "The Blues are now in a prosperous condition, their captain is deservedly popular, their number is steadily increasing, and we have very little doubt that in less than twelve months we shall see it as powerful in numbers, and as perfect in discipline, as any other volunteer corps in the Union. At least, we hope this may be the case, for all who know the Blues reverence the name, for the myriads of pleasant recollections connected with its past history."

Imposing Affair.

Possibly the most imposing celebration in which the Richmond Light Infantry Blues took part in this city was that attendant upon the dedication of the Washington Monument in the Capitol Square. This occurred on February 22, 1858, eight years after the laying of the corner-stone, already referred to, and on the one hundred and twenty-sixth anniversary of the birth of General George Washington. It is no part of the purpose of an article of this sort to give a detailed account of the ceremonies, which were participated in by Governor John B. Floyd, Lieutenant-General Winfield

Scott, Edward Everett, Governor Holly, of Connecticut, General Persifer F. Smith, P. M. G. Brown, Robert M. T. Hunter, John R. Thompson and James Barron Hope. The Blues were out in the parade, and at the monument, fifty strong, then under command of Captain William H. Fry. Their armory, according to the Express of the next day, was then located in the upper stories of the Law Building on Bank Street. It was headquarters for visiting military men, and in mentioning the interior arrangements it is not omitted to say that "the mammoth bowl which has so often overflowed with juleps at Buchanan's Spring, was suitably honored with an elevated position, and formed a very prominent feature."

Stirring Days of War.

Scenes in the Blues' history now approach the times of the War Between the States, but a comprehensive history of those times, even confined to the part played by the Richmond command, could properly be the subject of an entire volume. To a compilation of facts once collected by John A. Cutchins, now first Lieutenant of Company D, the public is indebted for a chronological history of the period.

While engaged in drill at the armory on October 17, 1860, an order was received by the Blues from Governor Henry A. Wise, directing them to assemble the next morning for the purpose of going to Harper's Ferry for duty in connection with the John Brown raid. They accordingly assembled at 5 o'clock the following morning and embarked at 6:30, together with other volunteer companies. On arrival at Washington they found that their orders had been countermanded, and returned home. One month later, in view of rumors as to the safety of the prisoners captured in the raid, the Blues were held under arms for two days and then sent to Harper's Ferry with the Howitzers, the other military, with Governor Wise, proceeding to Charles Town, to guard the prisoners. The Blues, after three days, were removed to Martinsburg, where they performed sentinel and patrol duties for two or three weeks. On December 5 they embarked for Richmond, and were enthusiastically received here.

Command Nearly Wiped Out.

When the war began in 1861, the Blues were ready for service. They responded to the call at the false alarm

(Continued on Seventh Page.)